



# Administrative Office of the Courts

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## Maine Court Issues Phone Scam Warning- For Immediate Release Jan. 24, 1014

Portland, Maine. Earlier this month the Maine Judicial Branch sent out a press advisory on an email scam involving a virus or mal ware. More recently, a phone scam impersonating court employees has occurred. Maine courts have received several reports from people that they have received a phone call telling them that they have missed a court date or a fine payment, or that a warrant has been issued. The recipient is then asked to provide personal information. We have received these reports in Fort Kent, Bridgton, Alfred, and Auburn, so it appears to be a statewide scam. The telephone number that is appearing on the recipient's caller ID is actually a Maine courthouse telephone number. The ability to show a fraudulent caller ID telephone number is called "Caller ID Spoofing," and unfortunately happens with increasing frequency. Caller ID spoofing is the practice of causing the telephone network to display a specific number on the recipient's phone. Caller ID spoofing can make a call appear to have come from any phone number the caller wishes.

The Maine Judicial Branch wants Maine people to know that the courts' collection practices do not include telephone or email contact, and that no one working for Maine courts will request credit card, social security numbers, or other personal information either over the telephone or by email. If someone does owe a court fine or a traffic violation fine, they may receive a U.S. Postal Service letter, a warrant may be taken out for their arrest, or their tax refund will be reduced by the amount of the debt owed to the state. They will not, however, receive a phone call or an email. Payments for traffic tickets can be made on line at <http://www.informe.org/cgi-bin/paytixx/paytixx.pl> and payments for court fines can be made on line at: <https://www5.informe.org/cgi-bin/online/courts/fines/login>.

Payments can also be made at the courthouse where the fine was ordered. People should not be giving personal information over the telephone, and if they have a question they should call the local courthouse and speak to the court clerk.